



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



# The Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians

## Chapter 1

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# Introduction

## Author:

St. Paul (Eph 1:1,3:1)

## The Recipients:

The church in Ephesus, modern day Turkey (Eph 1:1)

## Time and Place of Writing:

- Ephesians is one of Paul's four "prison epistles" (Eph 3:1;4:1; 6:20) (Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon).
- These epistles were written during St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome (Acts 28:16,30-31) around 61-63 A.D.



# Introduction

## Purpose:

The position of the Christians as members in His body, the Church:

- ❖ Our blessings in Christ (Eph 1:3)
- ❖ Walking worthy of the calling (Eph 4:1)

## Theme:

The church, the fullness of Christ, in God's plan

# Our Spiritual Blessings in Christ



- Greeting (1:1, 2)
- From the Father (1:3-6)
- From the Son (1:7-12)
- From the Spirit (1:13-14)
- First Prayer for enlightenment (1:15-23)



# Greeting (1:1,2)

- By the will of God: St. Paul knew the purpose of God in his life to be an apostle. This means also that his words are authoritative.
- To the saints: Sainthood is the work of God in us and we have to live up to this calling.



# Greeting (1:1,2)

- Ephesus: either to the large church at Ephesus or to a group of churches in Asia Minor including Ephesus
- The faithful in Christ Jesus: those who believe in Christ, His Word, and live faithfully in union with Him.
- Grace and peace: everybody needs these two gifts in his life.

# Our Blessings From the Father (1:3-6)



- God the Father is worthy to be blessed
  - ❖ Because He has blessed us:
    - ❑ With every spiritual blessings in the heavenly places.
    - ❑ In Christ.
- What are these blessings?



# Our Blessings From the Father (1:3-6)



- We are chosen by God (1:4)
  - ❖ Chosen before the world began to receive a special favor through our union with Christ
  - ❖ This favor is to be holy and without blame before Him when we abide in His love



# Our Blessings From the Father (1:3-6)



- We are predestined by Him (5-6)
  - ❖ To adoption as sons of the Father through our union with Jesus Christ
  - ❖ According to the good pleasure of the Father's will
  - ❖ The purpose of adoption is to praise the glory His grace



# Predestination

- The word "predestination" means "to appoint, to determine, or to design beforehand"
- We cannot say that the unbeliever is predestined to go to hell
- The believer makes a conscious decision to follow the plan of God and thus glorifying God
- The unbeliever makes a conscious decision to reject the plan of God

# Our Blessings From the Father (1:3-6)



- We are accepted by God (6)
  - ❖ Accepted by virtue of His glorious grace
  - ❖ Accepted because of Christ and in Him since He is the beloved Son
  - ❖ The Father testified this During His baptism and transfiguration

# Our Blessings From the Son (1:7-12)



- Redemption through the Blood of Christ (7)
- God paid His blood as ransom to set us free
- Forgiveness of our sins (7)
- Forgiveness is the loosing of a person from that which binds him
- These gifts are given to us according to the riches of His grace

# Our Blessings From the Son (1:7-12)



- This grace was made abound toward us
- Was given to us in all wisdom and prudence (practical outworking of wisdom)
- Revelation of the mystery of the Father's will (9-10)
- It is His pleasure to reveal to us His will that He purposed in Himself

# Our Blessings From the Son (1:7-12)



- Union in Christ: The Father's will is that, in the fullness of time He might gather together in one (Christ) all things in heaven and on earth
- If the Lord Christ is not the first in our life, we will be outside of the plan of God

# Our Blessings From the Son (1:7-12)



- Inheritance (11-12) in the Lord Christ, predestined by God according to His purpose (plan)
- God is omnipotent able, according to His will, to put His plan into action
- This plan is for those who first trusted in Christ so they can be to the praise of God's glory



# Our Blessings From the Holy Spirit ( 1:13-14)



- The Seal: Having believed in Christ after hearing the word of truth, the gospel of salvation we were sealed (by Chrismation) with the Holy Spirit which was promised
- The sealing means ownership by God and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

# Our Blessings From the Holy Spirit (1:13-14)



- The Guarantee The Holy Spirit is a pledge given by God that eternal life is promised to the believer
- The resurrection of the body is the physical redemption
- The believer is the purchased possession. We are "bought with a price."

# First Prayer for Enlightenment (1:15-16)



- What motivated St. Paul's Prayer?
  - ❖ Their faith
  - ❖ Their love (works)
- This resulted in:
  - ❖ Unceasing thanks for them
  - ❖ Praying for them (the main function of the Priest)

# The Content of the Prayer (1:17-23)



- The prayer is addressed to God the Father, the father of all glory
- He is asking for them:
  - ❖ Spirit of wisdom
  - ❖ Spirit of revelation
  - ❖ Enlightenment of the eyes of their understandings

# The Content of the Prayer (1:17-23)



- Enlightenment precedes understanding. Knowledge precedes wisdom
- We know God's will by revelation not by guessing when we acquire the wisdom of God
- Wisdom is acquired by prayers, revelation by the word of God, and Enlightenment by Baptism and the dwelling of the Holy Spirit

# The Content of the Prayer (1:17-23)



- St. Paul is praying for these three gifts that they may know:
  - ❖ The knowledge of God (union) (17)
  - ❖ The hope of His calling (plan) (18)
  - ❖ The riches of the glorious inheritance in the saints (18)
  - ❖ The exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe (19)

# The Content of the Prayer (1:17-23)



- By knowing God, we are implementing His plan, and thus we will be eligible for the glorious inheritance
- The plan of God depends on the power of God
- The potential of our lives is unlimited because God supplies infinite power to us



# The Content of the Prayer (1:17-23)



- This power is according to working of God's mighty power in Christ:
  - ❖ Raised Christ from the dead
  - ❖ Seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places
  - ❖ Put all things under His feet
  - ❖ Gave Him to be head to the church over all things

# The Content of the Prayer (1:17-23)



- We are one with Christ and in Him we will be above all principality, power, might, dominion, and every name, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come
- The Church is the Body of Christ

# The Content of the Prayer (1:17-23)



- The Church is the completeness of the Lord Jesus Christ (the Fraction)
- Christ is the head to the church, over all things
- Christ brings all things to completion



# Conclusion

- We have received ten blessings being the family of God, His Church:
  - ❖ What are the blessings from the Father?
  - ❖ What are the blessings from the Son?
  - ❖ What are the blessings from the Holy Spirit?
- What are the three things that St. Paul asked for the believers?
- What are the four things that St. Paul wanted the believers to know?